1: Burrows--104-105 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 421 Ifalik

"The concept of ownership of material wealth that prevails in Ifalik differs from our own. Ownership there is not absolute to the verge of irresponsibility, as in our economic system. A doctrine generally accepted among us--'It's nobody's business what I do with my own property'--would hardly be understood in Ifalik; or, if understood, would be indignantly condemned. Individual possession of material goods is, to be sure, a familiar idea with them. It is explicitly expressed in their language by possessive suffixes and adjectives. But in effect the individual 'owners', to whom these forms of speech refer, are no more than members of groups which share in the right to use the property; or else, in the case of those who have authority over its use by others, managers on behalf of the group. The whole group is the real owner, in our sense of the term. The nominal owner is either a co-owner or a trustee.

This contrast must not be taken as diametrical opposition. With us[105] too, there is of course a sense of public responsibility in ownership of some kinds of nominally private property; particularly property which the public uses and depends on,--public utilities, common carriers, and the like. This sense of public responsibility seems to have been growing stronger among us during the 20th century. But there is still a decided difference in degree between our concept of ownership and the one which prevails in Ifalik."

28: Spiro--20 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 623, 421 Ifalik

"After making their decisions and deciding on an agenda the chiefs let it be known that a public meeting will be held the next day, or in two days. On the morning of the designated day, the chiefs assemble in the canoe-house next to the Fanap, the public meeting house. (1)"

"1. The entire plot of land, holding the canoe-house and the fanap, is called Atelu, and quasi-sacred property, which belongs to the chiefs, and which people seldom frequent: The chiefs had us pitch our tent on this land."

28: Spiro--42 [7]
116, 471, 421

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Property rights and laws of inheritance of property are clearly defined. Theoretically, the Ifaluk economy can be characterized as state socialism, for all property, the natives claim, is owned by the chiefs. The entire atoll, land and water is their property, as is all manufactured goods, since they can confiscate these, if they wish. Functionally, however, in terms of usufruct, we may distinguish five kinds of property. 1. Free-property: 2. Public property 3. Lineage property 4. Patrilineal group property 5. Personal or private property"

28: Spiro--43-44 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 421 Ifalik

"Even a brief acquaintance with this culture reveals that private property plays a minor role. Only what a person himself creates belongs to him, and only such objects may be transferred. All other objects belong to a group, ranging in size from a unilateral descent group to the entire society and remains in the group in perpetuity. Two polar attitudes characterize the dynamic aspects of property rights--the punctiliousness with which a person refrains from using another's real property, and the culturally expected generosity of use of another's property upon request. That is, when a person wants a coconut he will never climb a tree that does not belong to him to [44] obtain one. Though the islands are dense with coconut trees, and every one has many more trees than he can possibly use, and though the taking of one nut would be of no economic significance, no one would dare take a nut from a tree that is not his. Each man knows his own trees, though they may be scattered and mixed with trees of others, and will pick only his own. This holds true for the taro patches. A woman will not take taro from another's patch, though there is taro enough on the island to feed many more mouths than there are on Ifaluk. But the proprietary rights in these patches is felt very strongly, and people are quite jealous of these rights, as is indicated by the TAT and by the admonitions of the chiefs to refrain from taking another's taro."

28: Spiro--44
116, 421

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"One is expected to be generous with his movable property. Though the canoes are owned individually, any one may borrow another's canoe, preferably with his knowledge, but even without it. A man wishing to make an overseas journey asks permission from an owner of an ocean-going canoe to use his canoe, with full assurance that permission will be granted, a refusal being unheard of. And the same holds true for tools, traps, and other objects that a person may wish to use."

28: Spiro--44 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 421, 181 Ifalik

"It is important to understand that the natives adopt a very pragnatic attitude towards this property. It is desired for use, not for prestige or 'conspicuous consumption.' Thus, though in economic terms they possess wealth, in psychological and cultural terms, they possess only property, and they aspire to property and to possessions, not to wealth, in the abstract. What is respected, therefore, is not mere possession, but rather the skills that enable one to possess, by creation."

28: Spiro--44 [4] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1
116, 177, 421 Ifalik

"Economic acculturation, in that it provides certain individuals and not others with certain objects, has resulted in a desire for certain kinds of property, and confers upon their owners certain prestige. This merely illustrates the universal economic law of scarcity as a primary contributor to economic value. Western gadgets, and tools, introduced by the Japanese or by the Americans, including the anthropologists--and of necessity distributed to a few--incur the admiration and envy of the others. The knives we distributed among the chiefs were the envy and admiration of all the men. The playing cards we gave to our 'boys' were admired and longed for by the others. The perfume we gave to Tom's wife or to the chiefs' wives was desired by the other women. Thus one can safely predict that as long as real property remains in the lineages, and as long as other property can be acquired by any one with the requisite skills that property and wealth will create no psychological or social tensions. But if native system of land tenure should be changed so as to enable some to accumulate more at the expense of others, or if the Navy should offer jobs to some of the men and not to others, and thus enable them to buy western manufactured objects--particularly objects, like flashlights, that can be used only by one person at a time, tensions will inevitably arise as they have in other colonial areas.

There are two factors, then, that have served to almost eliminate economic tensions on Ifaluk: The culturally ordained pattern of cooperation and generosity in the distribution of goods and their use, and the abundance of those things that are desired, so

that all can share in them. A change in either the cultural or natural resources, indigenously or through contact, would soon alter this."